1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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about quality and as yet incompletely dominated by ideas of welfare economics, the rural community is far less affected by change. While milk consumers in the towns are often either not completely convinced of the need for milk processing or at the other extreme will use only imported tinned milk where possible, the producers are generally even less convinced of the need for care in the production of clean milk. Unpasteurised goats' milk is still generally used in those farming households where milk is consumed at all, and understanding of the processes of infection is but slowly growing. Thus, in the field of public health and personal hygiene and medical care, social changes have been rapid, recent and uneven in incidence. Here, as in the economic sector, the mental acceptance of new ideas is not yet complete and is least advanced in the most rural and remote regions.

The examination already made of the demographic situation in the Maltese Islands needs some brief consideration against the background of social attitudes. The consensus of expert opinion is that in developing societies a falling birth rate is the result not of an actual decline in fertility but of family limitation. In most regions such a decline in family size is associated with changed social attitudes, which have become accepted in many countries in which Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion. Pope Pius XII himself condemned irresponsible parenthood and said it is 'a mistake and a departure from moral truth to exalt too highly the generative function even in its right moral setting of married life' (15).

The insularity and historical experience of Malta have preserved there a more rigid and strict application of Catholic rules of conduct, in which, despite the inadequacy of the Islands' resources to provide for the economic welfare of the population, the virtues of the large family are still stressed. Archbishop Gonzi in 1958 reminded an audience of young people that, although large families entailed much sacrifice on the part of the parents, parents should be prepared for a life of sacrifice (16). Father Vella, the founder of the Cana movement has said: 'One of Malta's glories is her large families' (17).

In Malta therefore the weight of the Church tends to discourage the secular social trend towards smaller families, and still makes illegal any provision for family limitation. Where secularism is strongest, in the urban cosmopolis, family size declines most rapidly. In the rural communities, where the precepts of the Church are most conscientiously observed and where the effect of secular socio-economic desires is most restricted, large families are normal and admired.

This regional contrast in social behaviour, when superimposed upon purely demographic variations in rates of population growth, becomes sometimes emphasised and sometimes negated. In the northern third of Malta, inward internal movement as a consequence of 'pioneer' agricultural settlement during and after the mid-nineteenth century produced a 'young' population, high birth rates and rates of natural increase. This region has remained almost entirely rural in social character. The second main region of inward movement of population, the suburban area, has experienced a recent decline in the early high birth rates as a result of the impact of secular ideas.

The urban heart of Malta in Valletta and Floriana by contrast, has been both traditionally a zone of outward movement of population and the district most affected by changes in social attitudes to family propagation. The remaining area, the heart and core of Maltese 'casal' life, illustrates clearly the delicate balance between demographic and religious and secular social influences. From this central area have traditionally gone the migrants to the new towns and the 'new' northern farming areas. The efflux has counteracted the traditionally rural and strongly religious tendency towards large families and a high rate of natural increase. On the southern fringe of this zone however lies the Żurrieq group of 'casals' and villages. From this until recently relatively isolated district, emigration has never been high and, with a survival of traditional rural values, this region has had in the 1950's the consistently highest birth rates - over 30 per 1,000 - of the *Maltese* population.

369 formed a facade behind which has hidden an old slow-changing and parochial Malta.

The towns are Italianate in character, the farm buildings archaically indigenous; the city dwellers speak a Maltese liberally sprinkled with European loanwords, the countryfolk's language is more strongly semitic. The urban place names are usually historical or religious in character - Valletta, Kingsway or [103] Strada Reale, Triq San Pietru; in the country one finds the older elements - Żebbuġ, place of the olive, Hamrija - red soil, Kalanka - hard stone. The Three Cities themselves have two sets of names - Kospikwa, Senglea, Vittoriosa for the Knights and their successors, Bormla, Isla and Birgu for the people. Architecture, language, place names, consumption patterns, even temperament still divide the two sections of the community. The farmers' forebears who helped to build Valletta on the barren Xibberas peninsula, and the citadels, the coastal towers, literally built a stone curtain which cut off their descendants from the outside world. These two societies, one cosmopolitan, one parochially Boeotian, have existed until recently in a fairly amicable symbiotic relationship. The country produced the labour and the iron rations of agricultural produce, the cities supplied the markets and provided the basis of defence.

Under British occupation however, and during the social and technical revo- 178 lutions of the nineteenth century, this balance started to break down. For the 369 first time, considerable opportunities of non-rural employment became available. 464 The high tide of pressure on land resources started to ebb in the last decades of the nineteenth century, leaving a flood mark of land laid out but never taken up in the western hills. Labour started leaving full time farming, villages such [166] as Safi lost population to new centres like Kalafrana. There has been an actual and psychological diminishing of that pressure on land resource that brought the present landscape into being. In spite of a three-fold increase in 150 years, the population rising to over 300,000, the number of full-time farmers is now probably smaller than it was 50 years ago.

A third estate and a new imbalance have been created. Fifty-eight per cent. 178 of the gainfully employed population works for the Government and Service 182 Departments, as compared with less than 10 per cent. in full-time agriculture. This section of the community, once it has severed its roots in the land, is also [164] apt to sever its connection with Malta. Net emigration between 1945 and 1954 [167] totalled over 45,000 and the population total now fluctuates rather than shows a steady increase. It has been fortunate that the direct pressure on land has slackened since the demands directly and indirectly to support the garrisons have grown with inexorable inevitability. Forts, naval bases and airfields, storage depots and houses - many more houses, have devoured scanty land. This conflict of interests has always been present - long before the conflicting needs of flying boats and fishing fleets caused trouble in 1956. The breaking down of the old equilibrium is caused by a variety of forces and in turn further strengthens these forces. Environmental limitation of personal opportunity has become as irksome as the desire for national political independence and the necessity for economic dependence. Social policy urged on by growing needs is hamstrung by natural poverty. In town and country alike a painful groping towards a new equilibrium at a twentieth century level is manifest.

Lastly what of the response to these challenges? What are the reasons for the slowness of recent adjustment? Fear, lack of security, the very factors that made Malta important as an outpost and earned her a George Cross are also responsible for many of her difficulties. The distribution of settlements is one indicator of this fear. In the traditional area of invasion and attack, the broken lands of the West, there occurs only one town, Mellieha, and even this, hidden from the sea in a defensible position, has only grown rapidly in the last 80 years. Another indicator is the strength of the Church and the general devotion it commands. Vast wealth and effort has gone into the building and adorning of the individual churches - symbols of one type of guardianship.

178 Fear - inherent or acquired - has hindered development in many ways. 182 Industry and commerce have never fully flowered because local capital has always 354 flown to areas of less risk. How can it be blamed? Even 35 years ago, who would

178 which are now 'rural' on the basis of the size of the farming
369 element are the old settlements.[4] The non-agricultural Urban zone is a comparatively recent growth around Valletta and the Three Cities and lacks the traditional agricultural basis of most of the Fringe and Rural areas where the villages grew little in size and declined considerably in relative importance.

178 A closer investigation of the declining relative importance of farming within the rural villages themselves over
241 the past hundred years (v. Appendix 1D, vii and Graph)
433 reveals that during some periods economic prosperity in
464 Malta has attracted labour away from the land but, equally,
166 that these moves were largely temporary and that there was a return to farming as soon as boom conditions disappeared. This was the case, for example, during the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the present century (R/381). Since 1931 there has been a general retreat from farming (v. Graph) along with a socio-economic emancipation of the Maltese farmer in which the traditional ties with the land have been loosened. The earlier, temporary moves lacked this social rejection of an old way of life. The farmers who left their fields for industrial work at the end of the nineteenth century were in fact never very far from the land upon which they relied as a stand-by when the boom conditions declined. Today the farmer's son, far from maintaining a foothold in agriculture, is as fast losing touch with the land as he is with the community which it supported. If a depression were to appear along with any limitation in emigration a return to the land would be less easy than in times past. This would be due not to a shortage of land for farming or to difficulty in getting work in farm labouring but to the current estrangement between farmer's son and farming, an estrangement as much sociological as economic in character.

178 The earlier temporary moves from the land were partial
464 rather than total in that the bulk of farmers and farm-workers
241 who had sought urban jobs had come from the Fringe or 'Suburban' areas rather than from the Rural districts proper (R/381). The present move away is however from all parts of countryside. It is evident that both today and in the past the availability of alternative employment has been the governing factor. The earlier periods of economic prosperity mentioned brought only temporary alternative opportunity for
175 the farm-worker. In fact until the present century the
464 only large-scale alternative to field work for the rural
288 Maltese and Gozitan was cotton spinning and weaving. Even here possibilities were limited. Cotton growing and manufacture in the Islands developed fast during the eighteenth